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Letter dated 29 January 2015 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to Security Council resolution 2149 (2014), by which the Council established the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

By the aforementioned resolution, the Security Council decided that, as from 15 September 2014, MINUSCA would initially comprise up to 10,000 military personnel, including 240 military observers and 200 staff officers, and 1,800 police personnel, including 1,400 formed police unit personnel and 400 individual police officers, in addition to 20 corrections officers.

I am pleased to report that, since the adoption of the resolution, MINUSCA has deployed some 75 per cent of its authorized uniformed personnel. This includes the deployment of 9 of the 10 infantry battalions and 260 staff officers and military observers, as well as the generation and ongoing deployment of nearly all the necessary enablers for the military component. In addition, 7 of the 10 formed police units and 159 individual police officers are currently deployed. It is anticipated that MINUSCA will reach 90 per cent of its full strength by April 2015, including 10 infantry battalions and 10 formed police units, with the exception of those units for which pledges have yet to be received or accepted, including attack helicopters, a C-130 aircraft and special forces.

The rapid operationalization of MINUSCA alongside the efforts of the French Operation Sangaris forces and the European Union Force in Bangui has resulted in a significantly improved security situation, especially in the capital. The phased deployment of MINUSCA in Bangui and progressively throughout the country has been focused on targeting those areas where civilians have been assessed, jointly with humanitarian partners, to be at most risk, in particular in the central and western areas. In Bangui, through an innovative joint military and police presence, the task force has been instrumental in improving day-to-day life by providing a renewed sense of security through active patrolling and efforts to prevent a deterioration in the security situation. MINUSCA has also contributed to the arrest of more than 240 individuals throughout the country, including high-profile members of armed groups and criminal networks alleged to have committed serious crimes. The relative improvement in the security situation in the capital has been vital to ensuring the continuation of the political process that will culminate in the presidential and legislative elections planned for July and August.

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Those improvements notwithstanding, the security situation remains volatile and clashes between anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka elements continue, while criminal activities aimed at, among other things, controlling the country's natural resources are increasing. Pockets of vulnerable Muslim communities remain under nearly constant threat and in dire humanitarian conditions, despite the efforts of the international forces.

In response to the situation, and in keeping with its flexible and robust approach, MINUSCA has taken some steps to recalibrate its force deployment. Following the violence in Bangui in October 2014, MINUSCA strengthened the task force in Bangui in order to secure the capital and critical infrastructure, including with quick-reaction capability. Doing so has, however, left fewer troops available to deploy outside Bangui, including in the north-east, which is an ex-Séléka stronghold. It has also required committing the force reserve to tasks in Bangui, thereby limiting the ability of MINUSCA to respond flexibly and rapidly to emerging crises throughout the country.

In addition, MINUSCA has had to dedicate 280 police personnel to the close protection of senior Central African Republic officials. Those tasks, which are currently being performed by two formed police units, have left the police component of MINUSCA overstretched. This has hampered its ability to carry out its mandated activities, including those relating to the implementation of the urgent temporary measures, and to deploy beyond Bangui as planned. As I indicated in my report to the Security Council of 28 November 2014 (S/2014/857), additional corrections officers are also needed to cover the operational and security needs arising from the implementation of the urgent temporary measures and the reopening of prisons outside Bangui.

I would therefore request the Security Council to authorize an increase of 750 military personnel and 280 police personnel for MINUSCA, in order to enable the deployment of an additional infantry battalion and two formed police units, bringing the complement of formed police units back to 10, as originally envisaged. An additional 20 corrections personnel are also needed to perform the above-mentioned tasks.

It will be especially important for the additional capability to be made available in time to enhance security before, during and after the electoral period, including in the light of the announced drawdown of the Operation Sangaris forces. Having received preliminary commitments from troop- and police-contributing countries for the additional capability, I am confident that deployment, if authorized soon, can be achieved by July 2015.

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon